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Thus by the Divine Purpose of the Universe—by the Absolute—every deed is seen in its true light, in the entire compass of its effects. Just as we strive in our human laws to establish justice by turning back upon the criminal the effects of his deeds, so *in fact* when placed “under the form of Eternity” all deeds do return to the doer; and this is the final adjustment, the “end of all things”—it is THE LAST JUDGMENT. And this judgment is now and is always the only actual Fact in the world.

LEIBNITZ ON PLATONIC ENTHUSIASM.

Translated from the original Latin by THOS. DAVIDSON.

[*Epistola ad Hanshium de Philosophia Platonica, sive de Enthusiasmo Platonico.*]

1. Your little work* on Platonic Enthusiasm I have read with much pleasure, and I think you are doing valuable work along with those who are throwing light upon the philosophical teachings of the ancients. As to whether Pythagoras and Plato learned anything from the Hebrews, I am not prepared to dispute with anyone; thus far, I have seen no evidence of it. I acknowledge that the worship of one God was restored by the Hebrews, after it had been nearly obliterated in the human race. That Homer and Hesiod visited Egypt, I hardly believe. No such circumstance is mentioned by the author of the Life of Homer, who is supposed to have been Herodotus. At the same time I am ready to admit that the Greeks owed the beginnings of their sciences to the Egyptians and Phœnicians. It is reasonably believed that Abraham, who belonged to Chaldea, taught the Egyptians some things. The most ancient doctrine of the immortality of the soul seems to have received the addition of metempsychosis from the Hindoos, and may be supposed to have passed from them to the Magians and Egyptians. Pythagoras introduced it into the West, and Plato generally follows him.

* *Hanschii Diatriba de Enthusiasmo Platonico.* Lips. 1716. 4. Leibn. Opp. Ed. Dutens. Tom. II., P. I., p. 222.

2. None of the ancient philosophies came nearer Christianity than Platonism did, although it is a reprehensible error to suppose Plato reconcilable with Christ. But the ancients ought to be pardoned who denied that the world had a beginning,—denied the creation, and the resurrection of the body. These things, indeed, can be known only from revelation.

3. At the same time there is exceeding beauty in many of the views of Plato upon which you touch; for example, that the cause of all things is one; that there is in the divine mind an intelligible world, what I am in the habit of calling the region of ideas; that the objects of true knowledge are τὰ ὄντως ὄντα, that is, simple substances, which I call Monads, and which, once existing, endure forever, πρῶτα δεκτικὰ τῆς ζωῆς, that is, God and souls; and the supreme intellects of these, images of godhead, begotten of God. The mathematical sciences, which deal with eternal truths rooted in the divine mind, prepare us for the knowledge of substances. On the other hand, sensible things, and things altogether composite, or, so to speak, substantiated, are in a flux, and become, rather than exist. Moreover, every intellect (as Plotinus rightly affirms) contains in itself a kind of intelligible world; at the same time, in my opinion, it represents this world to itself as a sensible one. But there is an infinite distance between our intellect and the divine one, inasmuch as God sees all things adequately at once; in us very few things are cognized distinctly; the rest lurk in confusion, so to speak, in the chaos of our perceptions. There exist, however, in us the seeds of those things which we learn—namely, ideas—and eternal truths springing from these; nor is it strange that we find in ourselves Being, the One, substance, action, and the like; and we know self-consciously that the ideas of these are in us. Far preferable, therefore, are the innate notions of Plato, which he veiled under the name of reminiscence, to the *tabula rasa* of Aristotle, Locke, and others in recent times, who philosophize exoterically. I am of opinion, therefore, that Plato might advantageously be united with Aristotle and Democritus in trying to philosophize correctly. But certain *χόρια δόξαι* would have to be expunged from each. The Platonists are not far wrong in recognizing four faculties of knowing in the mind, Sense, Opinion, Science, Intellect; in other words, Experiment, Conjecture, Demonstra-

tion, and pure Intellection which beholds the bond of truth by a single flash of the mind; what is competent to God in all things, is given to us only in simple things. However, in demonstration we approach intellection in proportion as we behold a greater number of things in a shorter time. I think, however, that though our mind continually depends upon God for its existence, as every other created thing does, it is not unaided by his peculiar coöperation, in addition to the laws of nature, in its perceptions. I think that by an inborn faculty it deduces *à posteriori* concepts from *à priori* ones in an order prescribed by God, as Røelius, whom you cite, rightly affirms. This doctrine I would extend even to the perception of sensible things. For, since they are not introduced by God miraculously, and cannot be imparted naturally by the body, it follows that they are produced in the soul by a fixed law, through a Harmony divinely preëstablished in the beginning. This is more worthy of an all-wise Author than continually by new impressions to violate laws given to body and soul. At the same time, in view of the divine coöperation which imparts to every creature whatever perfection there is in it, it may be said that God alone is the external object of the soul, and that, in this sense, God is to the mind what light is to the eye. This is the divine Truth which gleams forth in us, and which is so often spoken of by Augustine, and after him, by Malebranche.

4. That the soul is in this body as in a prison can be understood in a reasonable sense. But we must reject the opinion of the ancient philosophers, that the body is a prison in which the soul is punished for sins in a former life. The ancients were right in holding that the soul is in the body as at a post, which it is not allowed to leave without the order of the commander-in-chief. It was no unworthy idea to say that we are governed by providence, whereby we follow reason through the agency of fate, and like a machine, whilst we are carried along by effects. For from the Preëstablished Harmony it is now clear to us that God has ordered everything so wonderfully that corporeal machines are servants of minds—and what in mind is providence, in body is fate.

5. In regard to the virtues, also, the ancient Platonists and Stoics thought nobly, and Augustine is too severe, when, not

content with finding perpetual sins in their virtues, he thinks that even the precepts of the philosophers were altogether evil, just as if they had done everything, in the name of uprightness, with a view to pride and vain-glory. Notwithstanding, it is certain that they often recommended the wise man to practise right action, not from hope of reward or fear of punishment, but from love of virtue; it is also plain that this love of virtue did not differ from the love of righteousness which Augustine inculcates, and which he refers to essential justice, that is, God himself, in whom is the fountain of the Good and the True—a fact which Plato was not altogether ignorant of, inasmuch as he is continually looking back to the Self-true (*αὐτοαληθές*). But Augustine objects that the philosophers did everything with a personal reference, thus preferring the creature to the Creator.

6. I am afraid, however, that this is too much subtlety, similar to that of certain persons who have lately been insisting that we should love God without any reference to ourselves; for it is impossible, in the nature of things, that a person should have no regard to his own happiness. But in those who love God, that love of itself produces happiness. Therefore, even before the controversy came up in regard to the distinction between mercenary love and true love, I had seen the difficulty, and in the preface to the “Code of International Law” had solved it, by giving a definition of love, which met with high approval from intelligent men, and was held to settle the question. For true love, which is opposed to mercenary love, is that affection of the mind which leads us to delight in the happiness of another. For what we delight in, we desire for its own sake. Further, since divine felicity is the union of all perfections, and delight the feeling of perfection, it follows that the true happiness of a created mind lies in the feeling of divine felicity. Therefore, those who seek the right, the true, the good, the just, more because they delight in them than because they are profitable—although in reality they are the most profitable of all things—are best prepared to love God, even according to the opinion of Augustine himself, who shows admirably that the good desire to enjoy God, the wicked to use Him: and proves, in accordance with the Platonic doctrine, that it is the exchanging of divine love for transitory

love that is the cause of the lapse of souls. Thus our happiness cannot be separated from the love of God.

7. Hence there is reason for condemning the false mysticism of the Quietists, who deny property and action to the blessed soul, as if our highest perfection consisted in a kind of passivity, whereas, on the contrary, love and cognition are operations of mind and will. The happiness of the soul consists undoubtedly in union with God; but we must not suppose that the soul is absorbed in God, losing that property which alone gives distinct substance, and action; for this would be a false enthusiasm (*ἐνθουσιασμός*) and an undesirable deification. To be sure, some ancient as well as some modern philosophers have affirmed that God is a Spirit diffused through the whole universe, and that when It meets an organic body It animates it, just as the wind produces music in organ-pipes. Perhaps the Stoics were not free from this opinion, and this may have been the meaning of the Active Intellect (*Intellectus agens*) of the Averroists, and of Aristotle himself, which is the same in all men. At death, [they believed,] souls returned into God, as streams to the ocean. Valentine Weigel, who not only explains the blessed life for the free individual as deification, but frequently recommends this sort of death and quiet, did not, I think, give us any ground for suspecting that he held a view of this sort, which is insisted upon, mainly, by the *soi-disant* Silesian, Joannes Angelus, the author of some not inelegant sacred poems, bearing the title, *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*. Spinoza, in a different way, tended in the same direction: 'according to him, there is one substance, God; creatures are modifications of it, like figures in wax, continually arising and perishing through motion. He therefore holds, with Almeric, that the soul does not survive except through its ideal existence (*esse*) in God, just as it was in Him from all eternity.

8. But I do not find anything in Plato to lead me to suppose that minds do not preserve their own substance. This, indeed, to any sane philosopher is not a matter of question, nor can the opposite opinion be conceived unless it be supposed that God and the soul are corporeal, for on no other supposition can we rend away souls, as particles, from God; but such a notion of God and the soul is otherwise absurd.

The mind is not a part, but an image of divinity, a representative of the universe, a citizen of the divine monarchy. And for God, no substance in the universe—that is to say, no simple substance—perishes, and no person perishes in his kingdom. Irrational souls have substance, but are incapable of happiness and misery. But I do not wish to digress to things which do not relate to your dissertation, and in concluding this rather prolix letter, I congratulate you on so well combining erudition with wisdom, and exhort you to continue in this noble cause.

Hannover, July 25, 1707.

A NATIONAL INSTITUTE

OF LETTERS, ARTS, AND SCIENCES.

For the reason that here in America all forms of external authority are constantly losing their power, it is clear that a National Academy cannot have the same significance in America that it has had in Europe. It will, however, have a more important indirect influence. It will concentrate the attention of all thinkers upon the vital questions which it proposes for discussion. Emulation and opposition vitalize individual labor as nothing else can. The chief use of organization lies in the fact that it gives to the individual member of it a feeling of security in that the interest of the whole is cared for by the whole, and not allowed to suffer, while he converges all his activities on a single focal point. Only by such concentration on the part of individuals can valuable results be attained, and this concentration can be sustained by the individual only when he stands in organic relation to a system of individuals who are devoted to the other phases of the subject.

An Academy of Metaphysical and Ethical Sciences could not fail to stimulate the thinking minds in this country. It would be its province to state articulately those problems which our theoretical and practical life involves. All questions, however practical in their nature, involve, when sifted down, certain pure elements which are simply and solely questions of Speculative Philosophy. Great service is done for thought when these questions get stripped of their adventitious wrappings and are articulated clearly. The great theoretical question of the day—as all new books on Mental